

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
October 29, 2003, 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers

PRESENT

Joan Chelton
Cindy Felsten
Dave Clingan
Jay Myers
Gil Palmer
Chrystal Pushor
Marie Schroeder
Barbara Stevens

ABSENT

Dick Underdahl-Peirce
Madhu Vedak

STAFF PRESENT: Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, and Secretary Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Clingan moved to accept the minutes of the regular full commission meeting of September. Commissioner Palmer seconded. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley reported the balance as unchanged, \$5,036.32 in the Commission's donations account.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Commissioner Palmer attended the quarterly Audit and Review meeting during which, an unofficial discussion of the police action shooting took place. Available information has been obtained through the newspaper and conversations. Commissioner Palmer will meet with Gwen Wiggins within the next week to discuss incidents that have occurred at the schools prior to the Mockingbird incident.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley reported that Pat Bryant has resigned from the Commission citing scheduling conflicts in attending meetings. Several options were offered, including resigning from the executive board in an attempt to reduce meetings for him. Pat felt this was the appropriate time for his resignation. He has offered his assistance as a volunteer to distribute the essay contest. Craig Hawes has been e-mailed, with copies to the Mayor and to the Chairperson outlining the two

options available to the council. Option 1 is to appoint someone to fill Pat's position through his un-expired term. Pat Bryant's term expires April 2004. Option 2 is to leave the position vacant and fill it during the regular application cycle in January with appointment in April. A new member is needed for the executive board to continue executive committee meetings through April 2004. There isn't anything in the rules and regulations or the ordinance about filling vacant positions; therefore, the same process for electing officers will be utilized to keep the process legal. The vice-chair, Joan Chelton, will name someone in the next commission meeting for consideration. There will be an opportunity for people to add names. A vote by ballot will follow to name the treasurer.

Director Tinsley stated she has provided technical assistance to East High staff, at their request regarding a couple of incidents involving use of 'n' word that occurred prior to the play issue, and after the play issue. The school is considering providing diversity training in the keystone class.

Last month the school corporation adopted a series of new anti-harassment policies. This was not in response to any of the recent occurrences. The school corporation advised it was in response to the hazing situation that occurred in the Chicago area. The removal of the term, 'zero-tolerance' from the policy has not currently generated an increase in citizen inquiry. Deputy Director Smith has reviewed the policies.

CHRC received a call from Paul Jones who is affiliated with Peace Fellowship and ACCEPT after the agenda was adopted. Mr. Jones is asking the Human Rights Commission along with other community groups, to co-sponsor a community dialogue on the Mockingbird issue. Director Tinsley asked Commissioners to determine if the commission will participate in this. A possible date is November 19th. This is the same date as the November commission meeting. A subsequent e-mail was received from Paul Jones stating that Lynn Sullivan, of IUPUC, informed him that the school is interested in hosting the conversation. Harry McCawley from The Republic is also interested in participating. The Education of a WASP, a book referenced in the newspaper will possibly be handed out. Channel 13 news may attend. Mr. Jones is contacting other community groups, organizations and foundations for possible involvement. In response to the director's inquiry, Mr. Jones stated the NAACP would be invited. Director Tinsley consulted with the Deputy Director, the Mayor and community leaders for their input. All parties feel that the conversation needs to happen and that it would be good for the Human Rights Commission to participate. Director Tinsley asked the commissioners to define the level of participation and proposed that the commission cancel the November monthly meeting to attend the discussion and participate. An in-depth discussion followed. The commissioners agreed that the discussion should not be an indictment of the school corporation nor should CHRC facilitate the conversation. Commissioners affirmed the conversation should be larger than the mockingbird issue and in compliance with the mission statement of the Commission to

educate the community on subjects of diversity. **After discussion, Commissioner Felsten moved that the November 19th commission meeting be canceled on the condition we participate in the ACCEPT meeting. Commissioner Clingan seconded. The motion passed.**

Director Tinsley provided an update on the KidsCommons/Face-to-Face exhibit. The first day the commission will sponsor will be Saturday, December 6th, in order to coincide with an international holiday festival for kids already occurring in the mall. As KidsCommons does not have normal Sunday hours, the second day will either be December 7th or, another Saturday during the month of December. The total cost to sponsor two days will equal a maximum of six hundred dollars (\$600). Attendance will be monitored and any excess funds will be refunded to the commission. The Foundation For Youth was seeking assistance in providing field trips for their members. They advised it would take 10 – 15 trips to cover every child that participates in the Foundation for Youth. A maximum of 15 trips at the cost of \$50 per trip has been authorized with a cap of \$750.00. Director Tinsley will prepare press releases highlight the commission's sponsorship.

Director Tinsley asked for a commissioner willing to work with the secretary on the location for the 2004 annual dinner. Commissioner Myers volunteered.

FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

Director Tinsley provided a recap from the September meeting. There were three issues or proposals presented for discussion. Option four was 'create your own'. With the procedures and criteria in front of them, Commissioners raised pros and cons for each option. By e-huddle, it appears Commissioners are comfortable with the current procedures. The current procedures allow the use of a separate Laws award committee or the use of the Executive committee as the Laws award committee. Based upon a consensus of the feedback from the e-huddle, it appears commissioners would like a separate Laws Award committee but use the process that is already structured in the procedures. There were differences of opinion with regard to the criteria. Director Tinsley explained that everyone contributed to the discussion and began to understand each other's perspectives. One or two commissioners would like, ideally, to exclude all persons in public office. If the majority votes for this change in the criteria, the commission would need to address those candidates running for office. A higher percentage of commissioners seemed to be in favor of excluding persons currently running for office but not excluding all persons in public office. There are at least two commissioners in favor of leaving the criteria as they are with one possibly willing to exclude persons currently running for office. Director Tinsley explained that actions needed at this meeting were; entertain a motion, second it, have discussion and vote if the criteria is going to be changed. Commissioner Schroeder requested clarification of the possibilities for a motion. Director Tinsley advised, the option that appeared to have the majority that may result in a motion, was the motion to exclude from consideration, any person currently running for public office. Commissioner Stevens questioned what

guideline would be used to determine that a nominee is currently running for office. Director Tinsley advised that commissioners would have to establish the policy for that determination. Commissioner Clingan observed that a nominee would need to have registered as a candidate. Commissioner Myers noted the filing deadline that would identify subjects running for public office. Commissioner Pushor noted that the criteria had worked for fifteen years until last year and that the current criteria discussions are an attempt to avoid repeating the situation from last year. Director Tinsley questioned if the change in procedures, by having a separate Laws award nominating committee, would effectively solve the problem. Commissioner's continued discussing the criteria for the Laws award and that previously, there hadn't been any clear direction in the procedures. **Commissioner Stevens moved to not change the criteria but to have a nominating committee. Commissioner Palmer requested clarification on the motion regarding the committee and political candidates. Director Tinsley clarified that the Laws Awards procedures allows for the creation of a nominating committee for the award. As for clarification of whether political candidates would be eliminated, there was consensus that they would not be eliminated. After clarification, Commissioner Schroeder seconded. The motion passed.**

Director Tinsley requested the Laws award committee be created so they can begin. Commissioners Chelton, Myers and Felsten volunteered. **Commissioner Clingan moved that the three volunteers become the nominating committee. Commissioner Schroeder seconded. The motion passed.**

Director Tinsley asked for volunteers to work the Human Rights booth at the AIDS Benefit scheduled from noon to 7p.m., Saturday, November 29, 2003. Commissioner Felsten and Lula Young will work the benefit.

ANNUAL DINNER SPEAKER

Commissioners were provided with several media articles and names of potential speakers. Director Tinsley asked commissioners to provide a list of their top five choices for an annual dinner speaker. After some consideration and discussion, commissioners listed the following as their top five candidates: 1. Oprah Winfrey. 2. Dr. Cornell West. 3. Matt Souza, Sr, Vice President, Ethics of Irwin Financial Corporation. 4. Lt. Governor Kathy Davis. 5. Judy O'Bannon.

COMMISSIONER/LIAISON REPORTS

Gay/Straight Alliance Committee

Commissioner Felsten advised commissioners of a letter writing campaign to have sexual orientation added to the Indiana Civil Rights Act. Director Tinsley suggested strengthening the Home Rule Statute, allowing localities to have an enforceable ordinance. Commissioner Felsten reported some changes

implemented in police departments. Statewide, police departments utilize a uniform reporting system to identify hate crimes from other reports. Related to hate-crimes issues, Director Tinsley stated that Human Rights staff provided training for the Columbus Police department at the request of Lt. Rudy Olivo. The hate crime training included a section on sexual orientation and is now mandatory for all police officers.

Cultural Awareness Committee

Commissioner Chelton reported very poor attendance at the Diversity Panel. The topic was holiday celebrations. The committee is attempting to generate a calendar that separates significant holidays for all people in the community and include an educational highlight. Ramadan is the next holiday.

C4 COMMITTEE

Commissioner Myers advised there had been no meeting, no report.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Schroeder moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner Myers seconded. The motion passed unanimously.